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**Connecticut General Assembly
Government Administration and Elections Committee**

March 6, 2020 Public Hearing

Testimony Submitted by Pamela Klem, LWVCT Campaign Finance Specialist

The League of Women Voters of CT is a nonpartisan group of about 1600 women and men committed to promoting active participation in government, improving the electoral process, and influencing public policy through rigorous deliberation and consensus. We in the LWVCT strongly believe that campaign finance reform and its oversight by adequately funded regulatory agencies and/or commissions is necessary to ensure the public's "right to know", combat corruption, prevent undue influence, and enable candidates to compete equitably and fairly in the pursuit of public office and/or service. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony here today.

HB 5410 – An Act concerning certain changes to campaign finance laws.

The LWVCT believes that fully transparent disclosure of the source and funding of political content targeted to voters will strengthen our elections and ultimately our democracy. The citizens of Connecticut deserve to know who is behind the political messaging that influences their vote. This bill will strengthen existing legislation to ensure transparency and accountability in CT campaign finance through measures that address issues that have arisen in the Citizens' Election Program's implementation to date, as well as to strengthen accountability and transparency going forward. First, it will simplify and clarify that Presidential and/or gubernatorial endorsements are exempted from reimbursement or joint campaigning requirements. It also will allow Citizens Election Program funds to be used for dependent care costs.

It will also increase transparency around political committee expenditures, prohibits foreign entity funding of committee expenditures; requires online platforms to disclose who is purchasing online ads; and create "bright lines" between coordinated campaign spending and independent spending. Finally, it will enable better continuity and professionalism in the program's implementation by allowing members of the State Elections Enforcement Commission to serve for more than two consecutive terms. *We strongly support HB 5410.*

HB 5406 – An Act to revise certain campaign finance statutes.

Along with HB 5410 as described above, the LWVCT views the Citizens Election Program as the bedrock of "clean elections" in the state. This bill addresses certain gaps that have emerged in the CEP implementation in order to strengthen campaign finance transparency and accountability, thereby improving CT voters' access to full information about who is funding campaign

expenditures. This bill codifies federal court rulings regarding independent expenditure political committees and aggregate contribution limits for individuals, establishes disclosure requirement for independent expenditures attacking or supporting incumbents before they form committees, aligns campaign finance statement filing schedules for statewide and legislative office candidates, and clarifies other disclosure requirements. *We strongly support HB 5406.*

HB 5405 – An Act concerning qualifying contributions under the Citizens' Election Program.

The LWVCT sees the Citizens Election Program as the bedrock of “clean elections” in the state. This bill is a technical fix to a particular issue that has arisen in the program, that ensures that allows funds collected under the program for candidates who do not ultimately qualify for CEP funding may be returned to the campaign treasurer, and thereafter to the contributor. *We support HB 5405.*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for this hearing.